

story is unparalleled, for though it ends in a marriage -which one can tell without peeping it grows more exciting as it winds towards its close. Your heroine is fit to be worshipped — your first sight of her is inimitable. The Young Duke is as you say 'the noblest animal in the world.' The two scenes of rejection and the Alhambra Supper, and the gambling scene all wonderful, — the last so utterly unlike all gambling scenes in novels, no thumping of the table or the forehead, but all so desperate and so cool that it makes your hair stand on end. The *last stake* beats Hogarth. You must expect to be rated for bringing your fair innocent readers into such company as pseudo Mrs. Annesley and pseudo Lady Squib. I say nothing of your moral episodes, for they touch my heart too keenly to let me be at all aware of what effect they will have upon others. One reading has repaid me for months of suspense, and that is saying everything if you knew how much my heart is wrapt up in your fame.

The reception of the book by the critics was at least as good as it deserved, and it at once became popular.

From Sarah Disraeli.

May 1, 1831.

Wherever we go, *The Young Duke*, is before us, and its praises for ever resounding. But I know you care nothing for family commendation. . . . Jerdan has at last discovered that its author is gifted with every quality that constitutes a man of splendid genius. The highest power of imagination that creates and combines the most brilliant wit, the keenest sense of the ridiculous, a fullness of knowledge that conveys a characteristic trait in a slight phrase, and a long *etcetera*, of truths which I suppose he has acquired from, his -friend Bulwer. To balance such an extraordinary venture of commendation, he is obliged to find a fault or two. . . . The book is reviewed in all weekly and Sunday papers — all with excessive praise.

Subsequently the admiring sister reports, on the authority of 'some Americans who have just come to England,' that ' *The Young Duke* is the text-book of the United States, from which they preach and read, and learn that important requisite manners.' The one conspicuous exception to the general friendliness of the critics was supplied by the *Westminster Review*^ the organ of